

*Barbara Moulton*

LIFE OF  
JOSEPH SMITH McDONALD



From: Barbara  
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## LIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH McDONALD

Joseph S. McDonald was born in Belfast, County Down, Ireland, October 16 1842. My parents joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1841. In 1843 they sold their home and started across the ocean together with the Saints. I was one year old at the time. The ship we sailed in was very small. We could not sail unless the wind blew. Instead of the wind blowing it remained calm for ten days. We lay on the water all this time and could not move, then the wind began to blow and there came a great storm and it blew us out of our course, so that we were six weeks on the ocean.

We broke our cable twice in letting it down to steady our ship. Everyone was sure the ship would be sunk and the passengers drowned, but the Lord spared our lives and we landed in the United States.

My father and brothers worked seven years to get teams and wagons to cross the plains.

We came across the plains in 1850. I had the privilege of seeing Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith after they were murdered by the mob.

My father and mother were sure good people. At that time my father was going to work and he was surrounded by six or seven of the mob. They demanded to know if he was a "Mormon." He said, "No, I am a Latter Day Saint." The leader gave his hand and said, "We intended to kill you, but you are too brave a man to be killed for your belief. Go on your way, you will be unmolested."





I was eight years old when we started to cross the plains in 1850. We had three yoke of oxen, two yoke of cows and a pony. We were loaded with provisions and other things necessary to live in a new country.

It was a very bad year for the cholera. My father was a very stout man. My father took cholera about four o'clock in the afternoon and died about dusk.

The next morning we took some goods boxes and made a coffin and buried him on the north side of the Platte River. It must have been a great trial for my poor old mother to leave her husband on the plains and, with seven children, go on to a strange place about which she knew nothing.

But she was with the Saints going to Zion in the Rocky Mountains and I suppose that helped her some for she was always very religious. We traveled more than a thousand miles to get to Salt Lake Valley. The Indians were very bad that year. We had to guard our teams while they were feeding with a strong guard.

We could see Indians and buffalo everywhere. We had to stop our train or they would have run through it. The Captain rode up about half way and stopped the hind end of the train and told the other part of the train to drive on so the buffalo could pass through. They were over half a day in winter. I went to school. I did not get much education—all that was taught then was passing. There must have been three or four thousand of them, all on the run.

When we got to Salt Lake there was a fort built

of log houses with dirt roofs, no floors in them. We wintered there in the year 1851. We were advised by the authorities to move out into the country and make homes.

So we moved to Mountainville, now called Alpine. There were twelve or fifteen families there at that time. We did not like it. It was close up to the mountains and the snow was very deep that winter. There were too many Indians there. There was an Indian we called Squash. He stole a little girl from there and when it got dark he said it would not stop crying and he put his foot on it and pulled its arms and legs out.

When peace was made he bragged of what he had done. Some men got after him for it and they chased him around through Cedar Valley and back through Springville. My brother was with them. They caught him and locked him up in a house back of Bishop Johnson's. They kept him there three or four days and somebody went in and cut his throat from ear to ear. They did it up right, for I saw it myself.

In the spring of 1852 we moved to Springville. We took some land and started farming and sold some of our teams for something to live on until we could raise something.

Mother put me herding cows to help things along. I herded cows for four or five years in summer, reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling. But what I did learn has been a help to me all through my life.

While herding cows I had much experience with

the Indians. They were very numerous at this time. They made a practice of taking our dinners.

We would fight for it, but they were men and we were boys. So it always ended by losing our dinners and getting a good beating with a quirt.

We were herding on a dry bench and some men had made a canal just above us. We dug a swimming hole and turned some water in it and we forgot to turn it off. It ran down through the country and made it very muddy. The next day there were thirty or forty Indians hunting rabbits. When one jumped up they would all take after it. The rabbit happened to run over this mud. The first Indian hit this mud and went down and the rest all fell on top of him. It was sure fun for us. We boys all hollered, "Goody, goody," and clapped our hands. But when they got up and wiped the mud off a little they came up and got off their horses, caught us by the arms and gave us a good licking with a quirt and lariat. Of course, when we could grab a rock they would get it. But it all ended as usual and we got a good licking.

About that time the Walker war broke out and all the Indians disappeared. We built a wall twelve feet high for protection.

The last Indian we saw was very friendly with us. He came to our house about dark to shake hands with us. He asked my brothers if they would shoot him if they saw him in a battle. They told him they would not. Then he said, "Me no shoot you." He shook hands again and started away.

Mother gave him enough bread and meat to last him two or three days and that night he went

to Stuart Springs where we had two men, a picked guard, out.

He crawled up and shot one of them and the other shot at the flash of his gun and ran to tell the people to run school house because they thought the whole band of Walker was coming.

I was living with Mother at that time and she had forgotten her money under her pillow but all went well. For next morning she said she would have gotten that money if Walker had been standing at the door. Men were sent out to see how it was. They tracked the Indian from the house to where he climbed over the wall, to the spring and that cleared up the mysterious cause of the Walker war.

James Ivie was the principal actor in the drama that caused the Walker War. Walker, the war chief of the Ute nation, with his braves and their families were camped on Spring Creek about one mile north of the present town of Springville, Utah County, Utah. They were all at peace with the white men, spending their time fishing and hunting trade and being with the people.

James Ivie at that time had built a cabin and was living in it with his wife and one child, west of where the Indians were camped. In the forenoon of July 17, 1853, an Indian and his squaw came into Ivie's cabin. The squaw had three large trout which she wanted to trade Mrs. Ivie for some flour. Flour being very scarce at that time, Mrs. Ivie called her husband in to get his view of a trade of that kind, he being at work digging a well.

When he saw the trout, he said, "Those trout





look mighty good to me," and suggested that Mrs. Ivie might give three pints of flour for them if the squaw would trade that way. He then went out of the cabin to resume his work. Just as Ivie left two more Indians came in the cabin. One of them seemed to be the husband or had some kind of claim on the squaw who had closed the trade with Mrs. Ivie. When this Indian saw the trout he became enraged and began beating the squaw, knocking her down, kicking and stomping her in a brutal manner.

While the assault was being committed Mrs. Ivie ran and called her husband. Mr. Ivie came into the cabin while the Indian was still beating the squaw. He took hold of the Indian and pulled him away from the squaw who was lying prostrate on the floor. Ivie tried to push the Indians out of the cabin. When the Indian came in he left his gun standing by the door. As Ivie pushed him out he grabbed his gun and tried to get in a position to shoot Ivie. Ivie got hold of the muzzle of the gun and in the struggle the gun was broken, the Indian retaining the stock and Ivie the barrel. When the gun broke Ivie dealt the Indian a blow on the head with the barrel of the gun.

The Indian fell to the ground apparently dead, but did not expire until some hours later. The other Indian who came to the cabin at the same time drew his bow and arrow and shot Ivie. The arrow passed through the shoulder of Ivie's hunting shirt. At this, Ivie struck the Indian a violent blow and he fell unconscious by the side of the prostrate body of the other Indian. Just as Ivie got

through with the second Indian, the squaw he had been trying to protect came out of the cabin door with a stick of wood in her hand which she had picked up by the fire in the cabin. With it she struck Ivie a blow in the face, cutting a deep gash in his upper lip. The scar showed plainly from that day until his death.

Ivie again used the gun barrel to defend himself and struck the squaw. She fell unconscious by the side of the other two Indians. There was great excitement. I was a boy with big ears and I heard everything that was going on. We tried to settle with them by giving them everything they wanted in beef, ponies, blankets and flour, but Walker refused to settle unless Ivie was given up to be tried by the Indians. This was refused by the white people so the Indians left for the mountains and the war was on. The Indians killed every white person they could find. The war lasted two years. I was old enough to stand home guard.

I stood home guard once a week for nearly two years, but I was not enrolled, so I received no pension for my labor. That let me out from herding cows. They sent a company of men out with the herd. I was then turned into a farmer. I lived with my mother yet. She had a small farm upon which I raised enough wheat, corn, potatoes and squash to use without buying such things.

We had no meadow. I had to go down on the lake bottom to cut cane with some grass among it to feed ten or fifteen cattle during the winter. Then I had to cook it up and haul it alone. I remember my loads were as wide as they were long.





I had put up quite a big stack all by myself. When I threshed our wheat, I did it by driving a yoke of oxen around on it. I made a threshing floor by hauling clay from the adobe yard, making it round, fifteen or twenty feet, and wetting the clay.

I took a maul and pounded it down until it looked like a paved street and no wheat could be wasted. Then I placed the wheat around on it about six feet wide with the heads on top and then I drove the oxen around on it for a while and then I would turn it around and keep on until the wheat was all threshed out. Then I would take a rake and rake all the straw out of it and then I piled the wheat in the middle of the floor until I got my crop all threshed out. There were only two fanning mills in Springville and I had to wait my turn to get it cleaned and ready for the mill. I remember there were not any threshing machines in this country, nor mowers nor horse rakes.

When I got my crop put away I went to the canyon to get some wood for the winter, as there wasn't any coal. I went with a company of men for protection. I was then fourteen or fifteen years old.

Time went on like this for a while, when the government sent an army of soldiers to kill us all. Everybody moved from their homes and went south of Provo. For a while there was great excitement. Brigham Young sent word for everybody to make their wheat into flour and barrel it up and bury it, so when the army got into Utah we would have it for future use.

I went to the canyon and got a saw log to make barrels to hold the flour. I took it to the cooper to make the barrels and he made them on shares and gave me half. When we got the barrels I had to pound it down with the maul so it would hold a hundred pounds. We had twenty or twenty-five barrels. Then everything was ready for a move when ordered.

About that time we had been misrepresented to the government and they ordered an army to come here and straighten us up. Brigham saw that if they got in at that time they would kill us. So he sent an army to stop them.

They were divided into many companies and had orders not to let them in, no matter how they did it.

It was late in the fall and the grass was dry and they burned everything for hundreds of miles so their teams had no feed.

When their trains came along a mile or two behind or ahead we would charge down on them and tell the wagon boss to corral his train together if he wanted to live any longer. They told the teamsters if they had anything of their own to get it and they gave them two minutes.

They then set fire to their wagons and burned them to the ground. When the soldiers came in sight they would see nothing but smoke. We stole their horses, mules and oxen and drove them into Salt Lake and wintered them west of Salt Lake on the island. One company slipped up and tied firebrands to the mules' tails and headed them toward the soldiers' camp.



They knocked soldiers in every direction and next morning there was a soldier lying dead. He had died of fright, but they could not see any Mormons. The soldiers told us when they came in they could see Mormons sitting on their horses on every hill and they would bet there were fifty thousand of them sure.

Before they got in Brigham sent them word that if they would not make their camp less than thirty miles from any Mormon settlement, he would let them in. They were pretty well cooled off and agreed to his terms and marched through Salt Lake City and on to Cedar Valley and made a camp which was called Camp Floyd. Instead of doing us harm they were a great blessing. There was a market for everything we had in gold. I went over and made adobes for them and got ninety dollars in gold and gave it to my mother.

Finally the Civil War broke out and the government needed their army back where they came from, so they were called back.

General Johnson was a southerner and he ordered all the government property sold to the Mormons at less than fifty per cent of the value at auction.

They had thousands of mules and hundreds of wagons. You could buy three span of mules, harness and wagon for two hundred and fifty dollars. That was where Walker Brothers got their big start of goods to keep their store with, for they bought their commissary out.

A few years later the McDonald family moved to Heber City, Wasatch County, Utah. I was still

living with my mother. At the age of nineteen years I thought I was a man. I was going to leave my family and go north to the gold mines to get rich quick.

I was all ready to go, but they coaxed me to help them go to Heber. I did so and when we got there they held a meeting for my special benefit and made every reasonable offer if I would stay only one year. So I stayed and have never got started yet.

I always think if I had gone I would have got rich, with plenty of money and no trouble, but I stayed and got married. I am the father of seventeen children and I would not take ten thousand dollars apiece for them, so I think that is more money than I would have got had I gone to the gold mines. But deduct the trouble I have had from it and it would leave me a small margin in cash. While living in Heber City I got acquainted with a very respectable family by the name of Cummings. There was the mother, father, five boys and one girl. I always liked the girls the best. We kept company for a while and the first thing I knew I was engaged and I never thought of getting married, for I was going to the mines in the spring. I was only twenty and she nineteen, just a couple of kids. But we kept on going together for two years before we could agree to set the time to be married. She was a good partner, always agreeable and nice, but she died and left me alone with seven children. She died October 18, 1881.

In 1864 the "Indian War" broke out again. It was called the "Black Hawk War." I was fiercer





than ever before, for they killed men, women and children. If they caught them alive they tortured them to death by cutting them to pieces and burning them with hot irons, cutting the women's breasts off and scalping them while they were still alive. I've seen women's scalps hanging to their belts. They were long and wavy and combed out nice. When they went to camp they had a long slip pole and hung them on it and stuck it in the ground in front of their tent door to show how brave they were. The more scalps one had the braver he was considered by the warriors of his tribe.

I was twenty-four years old then. I was enlisted in the United States army and set apart as a minute man. I had to keep a riding horse and saddle in good shape, plenty of ammunition on hand for use on a minute's notice. It seemed as though the Indians were all gone. Our leading men thought the enemy was gathering together to make a raid on the settlement to make a wholesale massacre of the settlements.

They picked a man from Springville to go out looking to see, if possible, where they were, and he was to pick any man to go with him. He picked me. Next day I got notice from Colonel Page to appear at Springville for further orders. Next day we started and we found some Indians who seemed to be taking their squaws rather east to a safer place of hiding. We were gone seven or eight days. When we got back, I reported to Captain Wall what we had done. We had five Indians before they saw us. I cannot write just what happened on that

trip for it would be too long a story. The Indians gave us a good deal of trouble in Wasatch County. We had to put our cattle all together and ten men herded them day and night. They stole our cattle out of our corrals and our wheat from our bins. About ten or fifteen of the good Indians came in and said they wanted peace.

So Bishop Joseph Murdock made a big feast under the bowery and we all ate with them and gave them all the beef and bedding they wanted, because they were so good. But next night they stole thirty head of our pack horses to pack it off with. We followed them as far as Green River and got some of the horses but we didn't see any Indians. There were just a few people in this valley at that time, only ten or twelve fit to ride horses, so it kept us busy to keep them back out of the valley. I was First Lieutenant and I was kept busy as picket guard on the ridge between the Indians and the valley. We took turns, three at a time and we had to walk from the head of Daniels Canyon to the head of Lake Creek, a distance of twelve miles back and forth every day, and pack our guns, bedding and food. I was no fun for eight days at a time and then I had to guard the herd for eight days at a time at Cliff's ranch. Between times I was chasing the Indians in different places. They stole our cattle out of our corrals at night and four of our men followed them over the ridge and down Duchesne, until we saw a smoke curl up over the chimney. There was some fire crawling up to get a shot at them, and there were three Indians. One was on guard while the others slept. They had





killed one of the cattle. The guard was sitting on his haunches cutting some of the fat to eat, while the others were sound asleep.

The best man was ordered to shoot him and the rest of us to keep our shots for the others when they would get up. At the crack of the gun, the guard jumped up, put his hand on his stomach and started for the timber, but he fell before he got there. The others jumped up. One of them jumped on a horse, but he seemed to be in a hurry, for he fell right off again. The other one jumped like a deer into the timber and got away.

After peace was made the Indians said we shot through his breech clout when he was running to the timber.

We ran into their camp like there was a whole company of men. We gathered up the camp with the horses and their cattle and started back in a hurry for home. About that time Brigham Young sent out to Chief Tabby one hundred need of cattle to try and make peace and lift the trouble over who knew.

Captain Well was ordered to take ten men from the Company. I was one of the favored ones who was called to deliver the cattle and not to come back until we delivered the cattle and made peace. That was a hard mission to fill for the Indians had all gone east to hide their squaws. We sent an interpreter to get them to come back and fight with us and that we wanted to give them the hundred head of beef and try and make peace. It took them three days to get back where he was at the Indian camp on the Duchesne River. But there

was a messenger sent from Chief Tabby which the agent took into his house and we could not get to talk to him. If we got to talk to him at all he would only say, "You Mormon dogs."

We were stopping in a government block house and could not find what was going on. But the men that came over said, "They have started to kill every one of you. I cannot see you killed for nothing. They will attack you in the morning. I have all kinds of ammunition and as soon as it gets dark so the agent can't see you, send your men over and pack it over to this house. All I ask is that you return what is left of it, and shoot at them red devils. I have a two-inch auger, set your men to making port holes for yourselves. I have a forty gallon barrel. Fill it with water and pack in your wood for use."

"I have a big rope," he continued. "You sink a post in front of the house. Then bore right through it and put the rope through the post and tie your horses to it so the Indians can't run them off." We waited all night. The next morning after breakfast we felt pretty good. The old agent came and looked around and finally he said, "Gentlemen, do you know whose house this is?" We were very sore at him, for he knew the Indians were going to attack us the next morning, nobody spoke. And so he yelled out again, "Do you know whose house this is?"

I said, "Uncle's I guess." He never answered and worked on looking at the port holes we had made. When he came to one he swore and said, "Gentlemen, that is straight for my door." The





man that owned the port hole tapped him on the back and said, "You are the first man we intend to kill."

I never saw a man get out of a house so quick, and he did not bother us any more. The Indians came into the cedars next night and camped. Next morning at sunrise we could see them moving around and forming in line.

They then sent a messenger from Tabby as fast as his horse could run, right up to the interpreter. ten or fifteen Indians painted in black and they are ten or fifteen Indians pointed in black and they are going to shoot as soon as they get close enough. They will not mind me."

Al Hunting, our interpreter, slapped him on the leg and told him to go back and tell Tabby that if he came in on the run we would begin shooting as soon as they got close enough.

The Indian went back on the run.

Captain Wall said, "What did you send that word for."

"I knew if they came in on the run some of them would shoot," said Hunting.

In about fifteen minutes they formed a line with Tabby on the left and came in on the walk.

They surrounded the agent's house and Tabby got from his horse and went in.

Captain Wall said, "I must know what is going on in this house. Lieutenant McDonald, you pick a man and stand in this door and don't let a white man out or a red man in."

There was some excitement—every man to his porthole ready for action.

Captain Wall told Chief Tabby that Brigham Young had sent a hundred beef to him to make peace and talk over the troubles and he gave us orders not to come back until we had talked with him.

"Tomorrow at sun up," said Tabby, "I will bring ten warriors with me."

"All right," said Captain Wall, "But do not bring either guns or pistols or you will not get in."

Next morning they came. Every one of them was painted black and they had war clubs hung on their wrists, and pistols under their blankets. But we let them in. There were two rooms with a door between. We all stood in the east room and the Indians in the west room. Captain Wall sat by Chief Tabby. I stood by the door between the two parties, so that neither party knew what the other was going to do.

The meeting began. Tabby commenced telling some of the troubles and how they had been treated. Captain Wall stopped him and said that had been war. We wanted peace. "We are here to make peace," said the Captain. "We must stop killing one another."

The painted Indians did not like such talk. They would talk to Tabby and he would tell them to be quiet, and so they became quiet. Tabby was very angry at times, and Captain Wall also. Tabby told us if we would promise to kill Snow and some other men, he would take the cattle and let us go home. He would also send some of the Indians with us.

Captain Wall said we could not do that because we had laws that would not allow us to kill them.



"You do not need to kill them," said old Tabby. "Just get someone else to do it for you and that will be all right."

But about sundown he told the Indians they could have the cattle. It was a pretty sight to see about three hundred Indians go after the one hundred cattle. They began lassoing some and shooting others.

We talked all the next day and Tabby told us we could go home now, but not to go through the hills but keep to the wagon road and we would be safe.

Next day we started home and never saw an Indian on the road. Everyone was surprised when we got home. Five hundred men were camped on the public square. They were prepared to start at daylight so they could reach us before dark. While on our way home a gun accidentally went off and shot two horses. One was killed and the other was left on the road and made his way home. Bishop Murdock told the people that every man had been killed. Every woman thought this was true because the bishop said so.

The night after we got home there was a big party. Everyone went and had supper and a good time.

After this I took up farming and stock raising and bought all the stock I could. I got so many I could not winter them, so I took them south to winter quarters. I came to this valley when I was eighteen years old. I have built six houses in my lifetime.

*Barbara Moulton*

## LIFE OF JOSEPH SMITH McDONALD





